DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 107 648 SP 009 273

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TITLE Thirteen Alternative Learning Environments That Can Be Used to Evaluate the Impact of Teacher Inservice Workshops on Documented Learner Benefits.
INSTITUTION FILMS, Albany, N.Y.
PUB DATE 9 Jun 75
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Achievement Gains; Affective Behavior; *Evaluation Methods; *Inservice Teacher Education; Learning; Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation; Students; *Teacher Workshops

ABSTRACT

This catalog, intended for inservice program directors, describes a large number of activities for evaluating the impact of teacher inservice workshops on learner gains. The first description explains how to provide an activity-by-activity evaluation measure that identifies objectives, time period, resources, personnel, and success of outcome. The second describes how to identify positive and negative factors through an overview of the program. The third advises project directors to become aware of current literature on management and leadership by objectives. The fourth examines the problem of motivating all participants in an inservice program to strive toward new professional competency. The fifth considers the importance of being able to count visible and measurable success. The sixth looks at what can be done to prepare for local implementation difficulties. The seventh discusses followup evaluation instruments. The eighth describes how to develop an instrument to determine the competence level of participants at the beginning of the workshop in relation to the workshop's objectives. The ninth discusses participants' comments on and responses to the workshop. The tenth explains that the objectives proposed for the workshop should be realistic. The eleventh stresses the importance of considering what the participants want; and the last description emphasizes the fact that this catalog is not a blueprint telling the director exactly what to do, but a list of alternatives. (PB)

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JUL 9 1975

TITLE:

THIRTEEN ALTERNATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THAT CAN BE USED TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF TEACHER INSERVICE WORKSHOPS ON DOCUMENTED LEARNER BENEFITS

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DATE:

June 9, 1975

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SP009 373

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a catalogue. This document provides a large number of evaluation activities that can be used to evaluate the impact of teacher inservice workshops on documented learner gains.

A learner gain, sometimes called a learner benefit, is a measurable increase in knowledge, skills, or attitudes that students aquire as a result of participation by their teachers in teacher inservice workshops.

This document should be seen as an outline more than as a prescription.

Each individual application will stress only one or two of the learning environments suggested for evaluation of learner gains.

Any reader interested in coming up with more detailed and more specific evaluation techniques should feel free to contact the author. Other publications giving exact details are available.

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF TEACHER INSERVICE WORKSHOPS ON DOCUMENTED LEARNER GAINS

TITLE: Inservice Education Program Evaluation

AUDIENCE: Project Director of Inservice Workshop

OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide an activity-by-activity evaluation that identifies objective, time period, resources, personnel, and success of outcome.

2. Identify activities and organizational mechanics which contributed or detracted from the overall objectives.

3. Measure: (a) the degree to which participants have or have not met the standards of acceptable achievement inherent in the program objectives.

   (b) the extent to which major instructional activities enhanced or detracted from program objectives.

   (c) the extent to which non-instructional program elements (library, materials' availability, location, management, housing, food, climate control, non-classroom interaction opportunities, registration procedure, stipend reimbursement) facilitated learning.

4. Describe the followup envisioned in the next six months to measure (a) how competencies acquired, materials developed, or strategies planned were implemented, (b) the results of the implementation, and (c) the situation in and under which the implementation occurred.

5. Report the results of the followup evaluation from individual teachers.

BASELINE CHECKLIST

Does the proposal do the following?

YES NO 1. State objectives in behavioral terms.

YES NO 2. State objectives in terms of participant outcomes.

YES NO 3. Specify terminal behaviors acceptable as documentation objectives have been met.

YES NO 4. Link each learning activity to one or more of the specific objectives.

YES NO 5. Provide a minimum of one learning activity for each objective.

YES NO 6. Measure overall reaction to the program from:

(a) participants
(b) staff
(c) director

YES NO 7. Contain a form for the immediate program evaluation by participants, staff, and director.

YES NO 8. Include qualifications of all project staff and director.

YES NO 9. Specify time and site of activities.

YES NO 10. Indicate, if applicable: (a) the amount of collegiate credit (graduate or undergraduate)
(b) the differential requirements between graduate and undergraduate credit.

YES NO 11. Specify (if applicable) special institutional admission requirements.

YES NO 12. Include the following in the budget summary:

A. Name, address, and phone number of responsible financial office.
B. The submitting agency's internal assignment number
C. Budget summary notes numerically sequential to the budget summary
D. Actual computation of staff salaries and consultant fees in relation to institutional policies.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 1: ACTIVITY-BY-ACTIVITY EVALUATION (OBJ-1)

In order to provide an activity-by-activity evaluation that identifies objectives, time period, resources, personnel, and success of outcome, the following procedures may be employed.

1. Identify the major activities of the inservice education program.
2. Attach to each major activity in the program a short list of two or three objectives. Each of these objectives should begin with a verb. The subject of each of these verbs should be the participant attending the inservice education program.
3. Provide an evaluation form that lists, among other items, the objective number and a chance to rate it from very good, good, average, poor, or inferior.
4. Make sure that the above procedures are carried out with adequate explanation provided to participants as to what is desired in this type of evaluation.

This type of evaluation is done activity-by-activity on a very detailed level. This type of activity will provide a number of counts that can provide a session-by-session evaluation.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 2: IDENTIFY POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FACTORS (OBJ-2)

After the activity-by-activity evaluation stressed in Learning Environment 1, the program director is able to form an overview.

This overview requires some simple way of keeping score whether by percentage or by total points.

For example, a typical overview could look like the following two columns. Column 1 is an identification of the session. Column 2 is an identification of the percentage of successful achievement of objectives.

Session Identification	Percent of Success
Session 1	95%
Session 2	60%
Session 3	40%
Session 4	90%
Session 5	30%

It is the task of the project director to identify activities or organizational mechanics which contributed or detracted from the overall objectives. Looking at the two columns above provides a very simple format to identify common factors that were either negative or positive.

After careful analysis of the reasons for the outstanding success of session 1 and 4, it is possible for the program director to conclude that success was due to:

Teacher personality
Media adaptation
Audience participation
Question and answer period
Open discussion
Group interest in the topic
Appropriateness of topics to the needs of the audience

These positive common factors should be stressed in future workshops as elements that contribute to success. These factors of success should be pointed out to the participants and instructors in order to reinforce the positive influence of these activities or organizational mechanics.

In addition to finding out common factors of success, the program director should look for weak links. This might mean that certain sessions such as 2, 3, and 5 were unsuccessful because of:

Too much reliance on the lecture method
A very dull presentation
Nothing new was said
The audience remained silent
Audience needs were not addressed
The topics covered were poorly presented

After looking at these specific negative factors on an activity-by-activity evaluation, the program director is able to pinpoint specific things that should be eliminated the next time around. Sometimes, an activity-by-activity analysis can identify activities or structures that can be changed immediately on the spot. This on line improvement will contribute to the overall success of the conference.

Learning Environment 1 has stressed a MICRO approach to evaluation. Learning Environment 2 has stressed a MACRO approach to evaluation. The micro approach zeroes in on details. The macro approach tries to form an overview of the inservice education program. Both elements are necessary for a well balanced evaluation.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 3: MAGER (OBJ-3)

It would be appropriate for project directors to become aware of some of the current literature on management by objectives and leadership by objectives, a few names would come to mind: Mager, Popham, and others.

These authors should be consulted either in textbooks or in journals in order to provide project directors with specific examples of how to evaluate a conference according to prespecified objectives.

One simple way to start would be to go to the ERIC collection and the attached RIE (Research in Education) index. Looking up topics of interest in this way would provide the project director with up-to-date information on a wide variety of approaches. After having looked at a wide variety of alternative activities and organizational mechanisms, the project director would be in a better position to tailor the workshop to individual needs.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 4: IMPORTANT ATTITUDES (OBJ-3)

It is important for the inservice education program instructor to realize that a small percentage of teachers present among the participants are there principally for academic credit or the small stipend. The inservice program must be organized in such a way as to remotivate these teachers to participate to acquire a new competency.

A new competency can be acquired and/or used on four levels within the framework of inservice education programs:

LEVEL I: The teacher acquires a new competency
LEVEL II: The teacher applies this new competency back in the home school
LEVEL III: The teacher adapts this competency to local implementation circumstances and difficulties
LEVEL IV: The teacher documents the effectiveness of this new competency with specific examples of impact on student learning

In this way, an inservice instructor can take teachers who are present for a wide variety of motives and remotivate these teachers into a striving after new professional competency. This is a challenging task, but the reward is worth the effort.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 5: COUNTABLE RESULTS (OBJ-4)

One of the secrets of evaluation is to know what to count.

This means that the successful participant in inservice education programs must be able to go back to the home school with a definite idea of countable student successes that document the importance of the teacher competency acquired during a workshop.

For example, a teacher just ended a workshop on employability profiles. As a result of this workshop, the teacher was able to divide a printing course into five employability areas:

1. Operating the offset camera
2. Stripping the negatives
3. Making the plates
4. Operating the press
5. Binding printed material

With such an approach, the teacher was able to count partial as well as complete successes. A partial success would be an instance wherein a student was able to gain entry level employment in one of the five major areas. A complete success will be an instance wherein a student was able to obtain entry level employment in two or three of the major offset printing jobs.

The ability to count visible and measurable success is an important point in the type of followup necessary to measure the impact of inservice education programs.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 6: LOCAL PLANS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS (OBJ-5)

Some teachers go to a workshop with the anticipation of coming home with a prefabricated plan that requires very little investment of local planning time. Such prefabricated plans do not always work out.

The first step is for a teacher to acquire several examples of what has been found to work in a variety of individual circumstances.

The second step is for the teacher at the workshop to preview some of the first implementation steps that can be taken in light of the workshop period.

The third step at the workshop is for the group to preview local implementation difficulties. In some places, the schedule will be different, the students will be different, the barriers will be different, the problems will be different, and the reactions of the staff will be different.

In anticipating the necessity for local adaptation, the educator at an inservice education program will be in a better position to overcome local implementation difficulties.

After this has been done, the teacher should try to come up with countable examples that document learner success due to competency possessed by the teacher.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 7: FOLLOWUP EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS (OBJ-5)

It is highly desirable to find out what teachers did as a result of participating in inservice education programs.

There are some advantages in using a single instrument to tabulate the followup results by comparing one teacher with another. However, room should be left to give each person enough freedom to use individual ingenuity.

Sometimes, individual ingenuity is found expressed in a homemade followup instrument. The important point here is to make sure that the local followup instrument provides data that can be used by other educators in different schools and in different circumstances.

One simple followup technique is to use a telephone survey. This enables the project director to contact a selected sample of workshop participants in order to ask such questions as:

1. In what specific ways have you been able to use the knowledge, skills, or attitudes picked up at the inservice education program you recently attended?
2. How have you been able to document learner success related to competencies acquired at the recent inservice education workshop?

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 8: BASELINE DATA INSTRUMENT (PRETEST-1-2-3)

It is the responsibility of the project director to come up with some type of an instrument to pinpoint precisely where the participants are at the beginning of the workshop in relation to the objectives of the workshop.

The gathering of such baseline data avoids the situation wherein most participants are exposed during the first few days to things they already know.

To facilitate the best planning; such a baseline data check could be a duplicated instrument sent along with the application for the inservice workshop, but in any event prior to the conduct of the workshop.

This baseline data instrument should include knowledge evaluation (KE), performance evaluation (PE), and attitude evaluation (AE).

> KE refers to things the participant already knows or has previously read about.
>
> PE refers to background experiences and present skill levels of the participants in the areas under study in the workshop.
>
> AE refers to sounding out the feelings and values of the participants with regard to the objectives, yardsticks, and procedures of the workshop.

This kind of a check on where the participants are should be done several weeks or months before the workshop. This type of diagnostic preassessing enables the workshop director to plan a program that is best suited to the participants as a group or individuals depending on the activity.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 9: DIFFERENT EVALUATION PERSPECTIVES (PRETEST-6)

Experience seems to indicate that even the best workshop will evoke a number of positive and negative comments on the part of participants. Whenever the comments are skewed too much in either the negative or positive direction, something is out of order.

Without going to either extreme, the negative extreme of pressing participants to find something wrong with an excellent workshop or the positive extreme of forcing participants to find something good about an inferior workshop, the evaluation should include both negative and positive observations.

One simple way to do this is to stress at least three different perspectives.

Perspective 1 could be the perspective of the workshop director and his objectives. This simply means that the workshop director keeps score and explains how his overall evaluation was arrived at.

The second perspective is that of the participants and their objectives. This simply means that each participant spells out the major anticipation for the workshop as well as the major results of this workshop when viewed from the individual's point of view.

The third perspective is that of outside evaluators. From a research and evaluation point of view, this would mean pinpointing things that can be duplicated elsewhere at a reasonable cost with good expectations of success. From a management point of view, this would mean deciding whether or not to conduct the institute the next year at the same site or at a different site, with the same workshop personnel or with different individuals.

The workshop director who is aware of these 3 different perspectives as well as a number of other possible differing expectations is in a good position to provide the type of evaluation that documents the overall impact of the workshop in contributing to educational progress.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 10: REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS (PRETEST-1-2-3)

The objectives proposed for a specific workshop should be realistic expectations. This means that the budget, the time available, the instructional personnel, and the participants are able to accomplish the prespecified objectives in the plan put forward.

As far as knowledge is concerned, two or three days should be more than adequate to convey the basic information and conceptual framework.

When a workshop has objectives that go into the performance or attitude domain, two or three consecutive days are normally adequate to the task. Sometimes, this type of a program can be arranged to have two or three one-day sessions several weeks apart. The time between sessions allows both staff and participants to readjust individual activities in order to achieve prespecified objectives with greater success.

The difference between a realistic expectation and an impossible dream depends upon a number of variables. A thorough awareness of the competencies of participants can have much impact here. Given the right project director, staff, and participants, almost any objective can be achieved if the budget, timetable, and resources are adequate.

However, the typical situation is that only so much can be achieved in a certain period of time given the constraints of the participants and staff. A realistic expectation requires an accurate and objective assessment of what can be done in a given period of time.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 11 SPECIFYING WHAT IS WANTED (OBJ-1)

It is sometimes interesting to take the view of an outside observer watching two different mentalities plan for an inservice workshop. One type of mentality is constantly asking and answering the question, "What is wanted!" This type of person zeroes in on objectives, purposes, and benefits. The results of such an inquiry are usually specific and measurable.

A second type of mentality is constantly asking and answering in a dozen different ways the question, "Who is going to teach this workshop?" This type of person possibly has a pal or crony in mind. The difficulty arises from the fact that the well qualified associate may be more on the mind of the planner than the needs of the typical participant for whom the workshop is being designed.

There is nothing the matter with either of the above questions. On the other hand, the two questions are not equivalent. The two questions are not of equal value. The first question to be asked in planning a workshop is, "What is wanted?" The next question, which must come after the first question has been answered, is,"Who will teach in the workshop?"

The practical advantage of asking the first question first is obviouly found in the ability to come up with a large number of answers for the second question if the objectives of the workshop are precisely spelled out. When a specific desired product of a workshop is clearly identified, the personnel involved are able to produce this result with a number of different people, at a number of different price tags, in a number of different ways, and in a variety of different circumstances. Anyone who asks the second question first is like somebody who wants to go from city X to city Y but only by a specific road. If the road is chosen before the destination, it is quite likely that a new express highway will never be utilized by a planner who chooses the path before the destination.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 12 DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN A CATALOGUE AND A BLUEPRINT (OBJ-1, OBJ-2)

The term LEARNING ENVIRONMENT has been used in place of guidelines, criteria, or directives for the evaluation techniques herein suggested. A catalogue lists a large number of items from which each individual will choose one or two appropriate tools. A blueprint lists everything that must be included in order to make the construction complete. With these definitions in mind, this collection of learning environments is more like a catalogue than a blueprint.

As in pro football, this collection is like a play book. It is a good list that gives a wide variety of alternatives. Each project director is to consider himself an evaluation coach who will choose one play or strategy at a time. The exact choice will be made to match the local team available and other individual constraints.

The inexperienced project director will feel it obligatory to cover every learning environment in this collection. The hesitant project director might even feel it necessary to regurgitate this catalogue of evaluation examples with only a few words changed to avoid total plagarism. Both of these errors boil down to confusing this catalogue with a detailed blueprint.

This collection encourages project directors to think seriously about evaluation. The proof and result of this serious thinking is to be a documented plan worked out by each individual workshop director. This workshop director will spell out individual objectives and targets. In order to make evaluation more objective, each workshop director will spell out a number of acceptable yardsticks with which to measure progress. Some yardsticks will be original, others will be borrowed, and others will be adaptations or combinations of successful strategies found elsewhere.

With this perspective, any hypothetical case presented in any learning environment is to be interpreted as an example rather than as a specification. This example is intended to show what could be done in order to give a concrete example in place of abstractions. Obviously, the workshop director who would copy this example detail for detail would be manifesting a certain amount of incompetency since it is difficult to assume that local situations would exactly parallel the circumstances under which this example was developed.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 13

Here is where each reader writes in an idea, strategy, or value not cited above.